NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY

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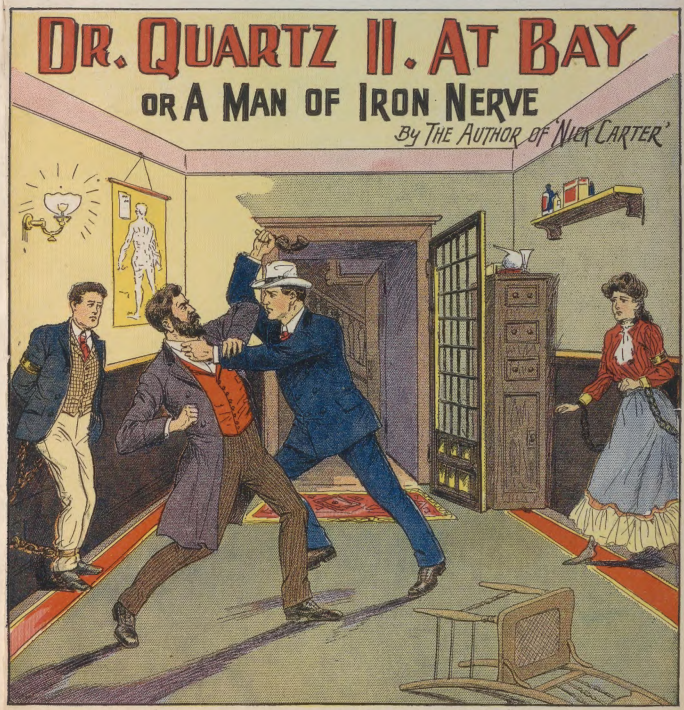
DR. QUARTZ II. AT BAY

OR A MAN OF IRON NERVE

By THE AUTHOR OF 'NICK CARTER'



The instant that Nick Carter leaped upon him, Dr. Quartz seemed to come to himself again, but already the blow from the butt of the revolver had fallen.

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DR. QUARTZ II. AT BAY;

OR,

A Man of Iron Nerve.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

A CRIMINAL FOR CRIME'S SAKE.

Nick Carter and the chief of police of Kansas City were facing each other across the big table desk in the private office at headquarters.

"Mr. Carter," said the chief, lighting a cigar and leaning back in his chair while he slowly elevated his feet to the edge of a couch near him, "the mayor has given me directions to engage your services in this matter of the freight car murders.* I don't suppose you will hesitate to undertake the case, will you?"

"Not at all, sir. To tell you the truth, I want the case."

"Oho! You do, eh? Well that is pleasant news. It is also unusual."

"Well, it is true at least. The fact is, this chap who calls himself Dr. Quartz the second, interests me more than I can say. I will give you my word, chief, that the fellow even looks the part he is playing."

"Really?"

"Yes. In appearance, he is precisely what the original Dr. Quartz was, ten years ago."

"Perhaps he is a son of Dr. Quartz."

"No; he is not young enough for that."

"He might be a younger brother."

"I have thought of that; but——"

"You don't think so, eh?"

"No; and yet, after all it is more than likely that

*See No. 413 of the NICK CARTER WEEKLY, "Doctor Quartz, the Second."

he is. However, I cannot imagine one brother so closely resembling another unless they happen to be twins."

"Then why not twins? They may have been that."

"No. This fellow is not old enough. If Dr. Quartz were alive, he would be fifty years old now. This man is not yet forty, if I am any judge of the matter."

"Then how do you account for the resemblance?"

"I don't account for it at all—yet; but I will do so later on."

"The resemblance is not the only point of similarity between them, is it?"

"It is the least of all."

"Tell me something about the original Dr. Quartz," said the chief.

"Tell you something about him? My dear chief, a book as big as Blaine's 'Twenty Years In Congress' would not be half big enough to tell you about that man."

"He must have been a Jim Dandy, eh?"

"He was the handsomest man I ever saw—and the wickedest. He was at once the gentlest mannered, and the most cruel; he had the softest and most musical voice you ever heard, and it could be the harshest and coldest you could imagine. His smile was the smile of a saint, but it emanated from the soul of a devil incarnate. His hands were as soft as velvet, but they were as inflexible as bands of steel when he chose to make them so. His motions were slow and methodical, but he could move as quick as a tiger cat, and as fiercely. His muscular strength was as great as mine; indeed, I have sometimes thought it was greater. He was the most profoundly learned man I ever knew in any walk of life, for he seemed to speak every language with equal fluency, to be a past master of every science, and to have acquired with thoroughness every branch of human knowledge. He was the most skillful surgeon of his time, and the most learned physician. I never knew from whence he came. He was a mystery when he appeared on the scenes in which I took a prominent part, and he was just as great a mystery when he died.

"He laughed at prison walls, and at prison officials; he even laughed at me, although I succeeded in laug ing last."

"You have a habit of doing that, Carter."

"Ay; but have I succeeded in doing it, in his cas I thought so until now; but now——"

"Well, what now?"

"Here is this new character which crops up when is least expected."

"What has that got to do with the original case?"

"This: If I were superstitious—if I were not w enough to know that it is impossible, I should think the present case, that Dr. Quartz had come to life aga I should suppose that he had risen from the grave. should believe that he did not die, when I thought did, for this man, with whom we have to do now, to all intent and purpose, Dr. Quartz."

"But he can't be the same; you have just said that

"I know he cannot be the same; and yet he is t same."

"Nonsense, Carter!"

"I know it is nonsense. I know that this is not t same man; but I also know—or, at least, I think I kno —that so far as you and I and the world at large a concerned, we are face to face with the same characte that is, with the same conditions."

"You are too deep for me, Carter."

"I mean, in a word, that we have here a man wh to begin with, looks precisely like Dr. Quartz; wh possesses the same character; who is versed in the sam sciences; who has the same smooth and oily manne who is as competent, as talented, as wicked, as unr lenting, as implacable, as adroit, as skillful and as da ing. We are confronted by the same conditions."

He paused a moment, and then continued:

"But there is even more than that, chief. This m seems to glory in the fact that he is—if I may ma use of the term—a replica of Dr. Quartz. He bold places a sign on the fan light over his door, and th sign reads, 'Dr. J. B. Quartz.'"

"Were those the initials of the original?"

"Yes; but wait."

"Go on."

"He begins his career—I refer to his police record

actly as his predecessor did; by undertaking, through lot of unnecessary trouble and expense, to call the tention of the police to his crimes. His predecessor ted up an upright piano box like a woman's boudoir, d traveled inside of it, in company with one of his ctims, three thousand miles by freight. This man s up an entire freight car so that it will compare vorably with a Pullman, and it is certain that he spent t less than ten thousand dollars for his little joke—it is a joke from his point of view.

"We know already that he purchased the running ar of an old car and made the rest of it over to suit s purposes; we know that he spared no pains or expense in the appointment and decoration of his car; know that he murdered——"

"Hold on a minute, Nick. That is the very point; don't know that he murdered anybody."

"We don't know it officially; but we are morally certain of it."

"You are. I am not."

"Very well; have it that way, then. I will say that believe he murdered five persons—three women and o men—in order to carry out his plans."

"Well, go ahead from that point."

"Having murdered them he embalmed them with skill which would put the ancient Egyptians to the ush; and then, with their dead bodies, he arranged a ene inside that car which would have done credit the proprietor of an Eden Musée. Nothing could ve been more lifelike than the spectacle of those four rpses, seated at the table as if they were engaged a game of cards, while the murdered girl was retched on the bed, under a sheet, with a dagger rough her heart."

"I'll grant you that. It was horrible."

"Well, my dear chief, it had a point; a point which e have not yet deciphered. In fact, it had several ints."

"What were they, as you make them out?"

"We must go back to the arrival of the car in Kansas ty to determine that."

"Very good. What then?"

"He shipped the car to Kansas, and purposely left it standing in the freight yard until the authorities were forced to take some action regarding it; hence, he wished the authorities to see it, and its contents."

"Well?"

"He accomplished two purposes in that."

"How so."

"He called the attention of the authorities to his own existence—that is, to the existence of a person who was not afraid to defy them, and he delivered a message, by the hands of those dead card players, to certain people for whom it was intended."

"All that sort of reasoning seems like folly to me, Carter."

"I suppose it does. It would seem the same to me if I had not known the other Dr. Quartz; but knowing him as I did, I understand this one."

"Explain."

"Chief, there was never a human being born into the world who did not have his weak point. The original Dr. Quartz had his, and it was that one point of weakness which finally compelled his defeat. If he had not possessed it, he would be alive to-day, and would have been able to snap his fingers at all the police forces of the world to the day of his natural death."

"Humph! What was his weak point?"

"Egotism. Conceit. Unlimited belief in himself. Call it what you will."

"And you think this man has it the same?"

"The freight car proves it."

"I don't see how."

"It was his conceit which built that car. He likes to do things subtly, deftly—differently from other men."

"Well, even so, I don't see——"

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"Let us say that this man, who calls himself Dr. Quartz the second, has run the entire gamut of crime without once being suspected a criminal. Let us say that he has stolen right and left, and murdered right and left, and that the eye of suspicion has not once been turned in his direction. Let us say that he has tired of all that; that there is no spice left in the commission of crime for him, for the reason that there

is no danger in it. That is the way the other man, the original Dr. Quartz, would have felt. His impulses were wicked; he loved crime for crime's sake, and he loved danger for danger's sake. He murdered because he loved to kill, while at the same time he proved to the police that he could do so with impunity. He could thrust the point of a poisoned pin into the arm or leg of an unoffending man or woman in a crowd, and an hour later, or three hours later, as he chose, that man or woman would drop dead. Dr. Quartz was never suspected. He could murder an entire family while attending them as their medical adviser, and it would be discovered later on that he had so won the confidence and love of that family that he had been made the heir to all their wealth—and yet he was so skillful that he was never suspected of the crimes.

"He grew tired of that. He amassed a huge fortune, and he could have gathered in more in the same way; but there was no spice in it.

"He desired danger. He wished to defy the police; to defy mankind, because he believed himself to be so much smarter than all other men combined. He wished to be suspected. He wanted to be pursued. He longed for the conditions which would point at him as the greatest criminal on earth, and yet to so hedge himself about with safeguards that while everybody should be morally certain that he was the greatest criminal unhung, he could laugh in the faces of the men who pursued him and defy them, because they could prove nothing against him.

"That was why he created the piano-box mystery. It was his egotism which compelled him to it. That is why this man has built and furnished the freight car as he did. It was his egotism which compelled him to it."

"I confess that I cannot understand that sort of a character."

"Nor could I—then. I do now, however. Having had to do with one, I know how to recognize the next one when I come in contact with it."

"But, man alive, why should a criminal who is practically immune from arrest, according to your theory, deliberately invite suspicion, arrest and conviction?"

"Because he is Dr. Quartz."

The chief shrugged his shoulders.

"Let me tell you one thing," said Nick. "You h set Quartz at liberty because you had no evidence which to hold him; and now, I'd bet my reputat that he is laughing at you. But more; while he laughing, he is preparing the way for another cri which will throw this one so deeply into the shade t you will forget it ever happened. Quartz has only troduced himself. Wait for his next move, chief."

CHAPTER II.

THE MYSTERY OF A MURDERER'S METHODS.

"Well," said the chief, after a pause, "let us down to the facts of the present case, and let the origi Dr. Quartz rest for a time, at least."

"Gladly. It is the present case with which we h to do; not the old one. And yet if it were not for old case—if it were not for the experience I had in one, or rather in the several cases which grew out it, I should be much more in the dark in the pres matter than I think I am."

"Let me see," said the chief, musingly. "I will over the facts as we know them, just for the sake of freshing our memories."

"A good idea."

"Your first knowledge of this case came through museum owner, Jeremy Stone, did it not, Mr. Carter

"Yes. He sent for me to come here from N York."

"I have never understood just why he sent for y Will you tell me that?"

"It was purely a matter of business with him. will have to refer again to the old case in order to ma you understand."

"Well?"

"In that case, the piano box was sent by expre The box had been kept a year unclaimed. Jere Stone attended the sale and bought the box. When opened it, he found that instead of containing a pia it had been fitted up to represent a diminutive boudo fit for the use of any lady; in fact, that it had been ma

ouble and weighted with lead to the exact weight of a iano shipped as that was shipped.

"He had purchased the thing by accident, but being museum owner, he at once saw the possibilities of the ox as an exhibit in his museum provided he could certain the history of the box.

"That is why he sent for me; and his sending for me esulted in the unearthing of Dr. Quartz. If it had not een for the progressive advertising spirit in Jeremy tone, the world might never have heard of Dr. Quartz -certainly not at that time.

"Now, in the present case, he saw in the freight car ie same sort of possibilities that existed in the piano ox. He determined to purchase the car, but in this se he proposed to make a mystery of it from the art. He made a great deal of money out of the piano ox, and he believed that he saw a way to make still ore out of the freight car; hence he sent for me.

"But there was still another reason."

"What was that?"

"You will remember that the car was billed to a per-n—possibly fictitious—called Z. T. Rauk. Now, if u will spell Z. T. Rauk backward, you will discover at if it does not spell Quartz, it certainly does not spell nything else. Substitute a Q for the K, and you have uartz."

"That's a fact."

"Well, Jeremy discovered that, so he sent for me; ut he did still more. He sent out letters of inquiry, nd discovered that the car had no owner. The com-any had not thought it worth while to go to that trou-le, but Jeremy did.

"I came to Kansas City at his solicitation. He met ie at the train and told me about the car. I brought wo of my assistants here with me, but I have kept em entirely in the dark so far, so that nobody aside om yourself now has any idea that they are here.

"I went to the freight yards and saw the foreman ere, and I discovered from my talk with him that ere were several people in the city who had mani-sted interest in the car. Among those were two men, ho are still under surveillance—and the two women I found at the house of Dr. Quartz when I went there to arrest him."

"And those women were dazed and only half conscious when we brought them to their senses at the police station," said the chief.

"Exactly. They knew nothing whatever about the matter which we could nail."

"And yet, Quartz made a direct charge against them when you arrested him, did he not?"

"Certainly. That was a part of his game."

"How a part of his game?"

"Why, in this way. He had no idea of having the affair connected with himself, quite so soon. Having those women in his house at the time I went there was merely a part of his own personal plot, the secrets of which we do not yet know. It was on the spur of the moment that he decided to make the charge against them. It was an accident that they were there when I went to arrest him, and it was only an evidence of his dare-devil nature that he made the charge against them at the moment."

"Your reasoning may be all right, Carter, but it is altogether too far-fetched for me."

"Chief, those women are associated in some manner with the crimes, but just how I do not know. That is one of the things I have got to find out. My assistant, Patsy, is on their track since you let them go. I will know more about them before long. I have not a doubt, however, that they are victims of the machinations of Dr. Quartz, and that they were driven to investigating the car through fear."

"Fear of what?"

"That is what I don't know—yet."

"Well, let us hark back again for a moment. When the car was purchased by Stone, he had it taken to his museum, did he not?"

"Yes."

"And you entered the car while it stood there that night, waiting for me and others to go to it and examine it the following morning."

"Precisely."

"We will touch on that point again, presently. The one I wish to make just now, is that somebody hired a

lot of city thugs to blow the car and the museum too, for that matter, sky high, that night."

"Yes."

"Well, the supposition is that it was the women who did that hiring, isn't it?"

"That was Dr. Quartz's charge; but we know it to be false, don't we?"

"From the standpoint of a policeman I should say that those women had no more to do with the proposed blowing up of the car while it was at the museum, than you or I had."

"Certainly not."

"Absolutely the only points you had against them was that they appeared to manifest some interest in the car while it was at the freight yards, and that Dr. Quartz made the assertion that they were concerned in it."

"Exactly."

"You and I both know that we cannot convict—that we cannot even hold people on such flimsy evidence as that."

"Certainly not."

"There was absolutely nothing at all against either of those women, Edith Peyton and her maid."

"Nothing whatever."

"We will return to them presently. Let us now go back to the car, for that is the point of issue."

"Certainly."

"Tell me about your entrance to the car, while you and Jeremy Stone were alone with it in the museum."

"There is nothing to tell more than you already kn w."

"Never mind that. Let's go over it together."

"Well, I found a secret door at one end of the car by which I entered it."

"Yes. Go on."

"I found four perfectly embalmed figures, two men and two women who had been wired in the positions they occupied at a card table inside the car. There was another embalmed body on the bed. The four at the table were of middle age; the one on the bed was a young woman, not more than twenty, if that. She had been stabbed through the heart after she was dead, and the dagger with which she was stabbed was still wher the murderer had placed it."

"And there is not a doctor in the city who has bee able to tell how any of the five persons in that car wer killed."

"No; the embalming fluid, whatever it was, had de stroyed all evidence of the poison used."

"But all the doctors agreed that they had been poi soned originally."

"Yes."

"Well, Mr. Carter, all that the police can see i that circumstance, is that five murders have been com mitted, and that the murderer took that strange metho to ship the bodies of his victims out of the city wher the crimes were committed, to Kansas City. But understand that you see much more than that."

"Why, yes; I see the methods of Dr. Quartz."

"And that, according to your ideas, indicates a ro mance."

"Precisely."

"That is what I wish you to tell me about."

"I am afraid, chief, that you won't have much con dence in it."

"Never mind. Let me hear it."

"Well, we will begin at the creation of the car."

"Very good."

"If you recall the construction of the car, you will re member that not only was the door at the end, as have described, but also that there were means of ven tilation at the sides, with screens arranged so that person traveling in it could have plenty of air as we as an opportunity to view the scenery in passing."

"Yes."

"Has it occurred to you that a man in constructin that car for the purpose of shipping dead bodies insid it, would not have arranged for entrance and egres and also for ventilation?"

"By Jove! That's so."

"Doesn't that suggest that the original purpose o the car was for live people to travel in it?"

"It certainly does."

"Hence, you see that the car was not ultimately use for the purposes for which it was constructed. The ca

In other words, was not built for the shipment of those dead bodies, but for the accommodation of live men and women."

"I see your point."

"Inside, it was so divided by heavy curtains, that it could easily be made into three separate compartments."

"Yes; I remember that."

"So, we will say that it was intended for a party of six—two in each compartment; but so arranged that the three compartments could be thrown into one during the day."

"Precisely."

"Now, one of the favorite pastimes of the original Dr. Quartz was to marry heiresses. He always selected a rich, as well as a beautiful wife. His piano-box expedition was a case in point. As soon as he had made himself the possessor of the girl's fortune—and he frequently had to murder the entire family to do that—he quietly killed her and then looked about him for another wife and another victim."

"What a fiend he was!"

"I conjecture this case to be one in which the present Dr. Quartz has attempted to emulate his predecessor. He found his intended victim, and he built the car, we will say, for the accommodation of the bridal party, which was to consist, we will suppose, of his bride and himself, and the four people whose bodies we found in the car."

"But——"

"Wait. Something happened to interrupt his plans. At the last moment his bride went back on him. She refused to be a party to the wedding, or her friends discovered who and what he was, and refused to permit her to fulfill her contract. We will say that the car was completed and ready when the plans fell through; so the doctor worked out a most delicious revenge against them. He merely transformed the car from a bridal to a funeral car. There you are."

"But where is the motive for shipping it here? Why should he send it to the city where he lives and has his office and practice? Why should he, after committing five murders, deliberately put the police on his own trail? Why should he arrange so that everything would point directly at him, and then, in effect, pose before us, and virtually say: 'Here I am! Come and take me?' "

CHAPTER III.

A MAN WHO IS NEVER OFF HIS GUARD.

"My dear chief," replied Nick, to the last question, "if we could answer all such puzzles at the time they arise, there would be no need for detectives. We are face to face with a mystery which is so complex, that the moment we think we have discovered a possible solution we encounter an obstacle which puts us entirely at sea again."

"I should say we did!"

"The mere facts, so far as we know them, are merely these: We——"

"That is right. State them. I would like to listen to a few facts after all this theorizing."

"I was about to do so."

"Go ahead."

"Fact 1: A car containing five dead bodies is shipped to Kansas City, and is opened there in the presence of the authorities."

The chief nodded.

"Fact 2: The bodies are found to be so perfectly embalmed, that the method of accomplishing the result is unknown to science, for there is not an undertaker, or a doctor, who can give us any information on the subject."

"Not one."

"Fact 3: Circumstances point to the association of certain names with the crimes. Those names are, Dr. Quartz, Edith Peyton, and her maid, Susan Cummings. There are two other men whose names we do not know, but who evidently had no connection with the crime itself, and were merely tools of some other person—probably Dr. Quartz—after the arrival of the car in Kansas City."

"Well?"

"Fact 4: There is nowhere discovered a scrap of information which will afford us any clew to the identity of the five bodies in the freight car. The car came

from Philadelphia, but it is evident that the murdered men and women did not belong there."

"Quite so; nor the car, either. The police of Philadelphia can give us no information whatever."

"Fact 5: Of the three names which circumstances have associated with the crimes, there is absolutely no evidence whatever against any of them. Dr. Quartz readily proves an alibi to offset everything you attempt to prove against him, and pleasantly laughs at you. Edith Peyton and her maid are in the same category, with the additional fact that they are either both of weak minds, or are still under the influence of a drug which has been administered to them to keep them silent. If Edith Peyton does not really forget, or is not really ignorant, she plays the part so well that we can do nothing with her."

"Correct. And the maid, also."

"Fact 6: This is an accumulation of detail, as follows: The corpses have no identity; the car has no owner; the motive for the murders is a mystery; the instrument of death is unknown in each case; Dr. Quartz, so far as we know, is an estimable gentleman; the two women, so far as we know, were as ignorant of the contents of the car as you and I were; and there is absolutely nothing for us to go by in unraveling the mystery, save the car itself, and what it contained."

"Now you are talking something I can understand."

"You mean, something which neither of us understand. Now against these six facts, I have taken the following steps: I have telegraphed my assistant, Chick, to take up the car end of it. He is now in Philadelphia, tracing the car from that point, backward, and I shall, myself, take up the task of working out the identities of the murdered persons. So much for fact 1. For fact 2, Dr. Wentworth, the great toxicologist, and chemical expert arrived here last night and is now attempting to solve the mystery connected with the embalming of the bodies."

"What do you expect to accomplish by that?"

"Merely to add a nail to the future coffin of Dr. Quartz, as you will see. If he is as great a scientist as his predecessor, I will get evidence against him through that mysterious embalming fluid."

"What about fact 3?"

"Under that head, I shall take the trail of Dr. Quar myself; I think that will work in very well with nee investigation of the identity of the murdered persone Also, I have put one of my cleverest assistants—Ter Ichi—on the track of Edith Peyton and her maid; and Patsy is working with the burglar, big Jim Gleaso who tried to blow up the car, to discover the real co nection with this case of the two unknown men wh went to the freight yards to see the car."

"Fact 4 is already covered by yourself."

"Yes."

"And Ten-Ichi will soon, you believe, be able to te you all about fact 5."

"I do believe it; yes."

"And for fact 6? You have already covered th ground also."

"Follow it with your eye while I go over it again: shall discover the identity of the bodies before I am position to go on with the case understandingly; Chic will do the same service by the car, and will trace to its owner; the motive for the murders will be r vealed when the identity of the murdered persons known; how they were killed, will develop in the na ural course of events; if Dr. Quartz is an estimable ge tleman, I shall find it out, and if he is not, I shall kno it; Ten-Ichi will, within a week, know exactly wh association Edith Peyton and her maid may have, have had, with Dr. Quartz and with the car. Ther you are."

"H'm! Well, all that sounds reasonable. I can u derstand it much better than I can all that stuff abou theorizing on what Dr. Quartz's egotism will do, an his plans for revenge. Now, about your pay for th case, Carter. The mayor——"

"I will send in my bill when I have finished."

"Exactly. That is just what I was about to sugges The mayor does not care to have any rewards offered In fact, he agrees with me that the best thing is to keep the whole matter as quiet as possible."

Nick smiled broadly.

"Quiet or noisy, it doesn't matter to me now," he said. "I have no objection to having it known from

one ocean to the other, that I am on this case. Usually I prefer to work on the quiet, but just now, I much prefer to have Dr. Quartz know that Nick Carter is after him. In fact, I shall take pains to inform him of the fact myself."

"You will? When, and how?"

"This very evening, and by going to his house and telling him of it."

"Do you mean to say that you will accuse him to his face?"

"Something very like it," smiled Nick; "although I shall not exactly do it in words."

"But you intend to go to his house."

"I do. I wish to study the man."

"Look out, Carter. He may select you for the next bit of merchandise he wishes to send across the continent by freight, or express."

"I only wish he would. I think I'd fool him. That was the game his predecessor played—and lost. The fact is, chief, I have already got a little evidence against Quartz, which I have not told you about."

"What is it?"

The detective took from one of his pockets a small velvet case which had once contained a lady's watch, and passed it to the chief.

"Look at that," he said.

"What of it?" asked the chief. "It looks like a watch case."

"It is. Open it."

The chief pressed the spring and the cover flew back, disclosing the fact that the circular bed in which a gold watch had once reposed, was now filled with white wax, and that the wax had received an impression of some sort upon its surface.

"What about it?" asked the chief.

"Do you remember," asked Nick, "that when I searched the freight car in which the bodies came here, the only thing I discovered which was not put there purposely for you, or me, or somebody to find, was the imprint of several dirty fingers against the velvet plush near the secret door?"

"Yes."

"The imprint of one of those fingers—the first finger of the left hand—is very plain. I had it photographed, and then had the negative intensified and enlarged."

"Well?"

"I have put the wax in that case for the purpose of asking Dr. Quartz to give me, of his own free will, an impression of the first finger of his left hand."

"But there is already an impression here."

"That was made by my own finger. I put it there merely to show the doctor what a perfect impression the wax would produce."

"But he will refuse, likely."

"Chief, I don't care a rap whether he consents or refuses. What I want to see is the expression of his face when I ask him the question."

"What do you expect to gain by that?"

"Merely one glance at the man's thoughts. He won't refuse, but the suggestion will be a surprise to him. He knows as well as I do, that it is only in novels where a murderer is traced to his doom by the impression of his thumb or a finger. It doesn't happen in real life. The impression of my own finger looks enough like the one on the velvet near the door to convict me of the crime if that was the only thing to go by. Dr. Quartz's finger will appear much the same, and you, or I, or anybody, could determine nothing definite by it."

"Then what in the dev——"

"It is probable that Quartz has never thought of this thing. In all his studies, it may never have occurred to him to ask if a man may be traced by the impression of a finger mark. If he has not thought of it, ever, the suggestion will come to him as a surprise, and there will be one instant of hesitation while he collects his wits. It is that instant of hesitation which I wish to observe."

"I will confess, Nick, that your points are much too fine for me."

"A second's thought will convince him of the utter uselessness of the device, and he will not hesitate after that, to grant me the impression of his finger; but, and here is the point, if his finger did make that mark near the door of the car, and if he has not thought about the pro or con of being traced by it, I will know it, no mat-

ter how guarded he may be, in that first instant when I ask for the impression."

"It is possible," said the chief, with a shrug; "I will not pretend to know."

"Men like Dr. Quartz are forever on their guard. The one thing to do with characters like his is to catch them off their guard. That is next to an impossible feat. If you wished to throw a stone through a certain window into a house, and you knew that window to be always barred with iron shutters, you would regard the feat as rather impossible, wouldn't you?"

"I should say so."

"But if you could devise some means whereby you could force the person on guard inside that window to open it for the purpose of looking out for an instant, then if you stood by, with a stone ready to hurl, you would stand a fairly good chance of succeeding, eh?"

"Sure."

"Well, Dr. Quartz's exterior is just such a window. He never opens it when there is a person near enough to him to see through it. In other words, he is always on his guard."

"And you propose, by this suggestion, to throw him off his guard for an instant."

"I think I can—provided he has not given the subject some thought. You see, he does not know that those finger marks are on the velvet near the door of the car."

"Why are you sure of that?"

"Because if he had known he made them he would have removed them. Not having removed them, he does not know they are there."

"He may have found out since that they are there."

"In that case, he will be on his guard, and I will not get the shutters open for me to see through; but I don't think he knows they are there. I think I will have a glimpse of the inside."

"When are you going there?"

"At once; when I leave you."

"Well, I hope you will get a look through that window. When will I see you again, Carter?"

"When I can tell you the true story of the mystery of the five murders."

CHAPTER IV.

THE DEFIANCE OF DR. QUARTZ.

When Nick Carter rang the bell of Dr. Quartz's residence and the door was opened by a servant in livery the detective gave his own personal card to be delivered to the mysterious man upon whom he had called.

That card was engraved plainly with his own name and, therefore, Dr. Quartz would know at once that the detective had determined to seek his interview boldly, and without any sort of subterfuge.

He was shown into the reception room, and presently the doctor came to him there.

He paused just inside the doorway and regarded his caller with an expression which was difficult to define; still there was a smile on his face; but whether it was one of welcome or of derision, or what it might portend, Nick could not determine.

"I scarcely hoped that you would do me so great an honor, Mr. Carter," said the doctor, in that strangely melodious voice which he could render as soft as the purring of a cat. "To what circumstance am I indebted for this call?"

He came on into the room while he was speaking and motioned to Nick to resume the chair he had vacated upon the doctor's entrance.

"My call is due to a very natural desire on my part," replied Nick, "to ask you a few questions which I think you will not hesitate to answer."

"We can better determine that when I have listened to the questions you wish to ask," said the doctor, still smiling.

"Assuredly. You have announced yourself, I believe, as Dr. Quartz the second."

"Not at all. I have never done so. You are entirely mistaken."

"Indeed?"

"I know, of course, that there was once a certain Dr. Quartz; but there might also have been a dozen of them for all I know to the contrary. The qualifying title—'The Second'—has been given to me by others."

"Still you know to whom I refer as your predecessor?"

"Certainly."

"Did you ever know the man himself?"

"Certainly."

"Were you related?"

"He was my brother—ten years older than I."

"Thank you for being so explicit. Will you tell me ow it happens that your initials are the same as his ere?"

"His first name was John—or Jack, as he was famil-rly called. My first name is James. Our middle ini-als were likewise the same. Do you care to be made quainted with my ancestry?"

The studied insolence of the question brought a smile the face of the detective; but he replied as coolly:

"It would give me a great deal of pleasure to know ho your fathers were before you."

"So sorry that I do not feel called upon to accom-odate you with the information, sir. Unless I am reatly mistaken you had ample opportunity to obtain ose facts from my brother. Doubtless you have asked im the same question in the past."

"Often," replied Nick.

"The last time you called here," said the doctor, nar-owing his eyes a little, and sharpening them so that ey seemed like two narrow points which were reading e soul of the detective—if it had happened that Nick's ul could be so easily read—"you came here to arrest e on an entirely foolish charge, and in order to make ou appear still more ridiculous, I played a little joke n you."

"You refer, I suppose, to your own charge against e two women whom I found here at that time," said ick.

"Yes."

"One of my reasons for coming here this evening as to ask you to explain that joke."

"Was it, indeed? Are you so dense that you could ot see through it?"

"I must confess that I was."

"How shall I make you understand? Let me see."

The doctor dropped his chin upon one of his hands nd appeared to be lost in thought, but the detective ould see that he was smiling.

Presently, with an appearance of frankness which Nick knew was assumed, he raised his head again, and with that same enigmatical smile on his lips, said:

"I think we were all more or less interested in the mysterious freight car, were we not?"

"It would appear so," replied Nick, "although you have not made public any interest you might have felt in it."

"Let us say that I was interested, then, and let it go at that."

"Very well—for the present."

"I think, Mr. Carter, that I will have to deviate from the direct subject for a moment, in order to make you understand."

"Take any course you please, doctor. I am a crea-ture of extraordinary patience."

"So I have been informed. Very well. You must know, to begin with, that while you have been unaware of my existence, I have been quite familiar with yours."

"Indeed? You surprise me!"

"I will surprise you still more before I am through."

"I like to be surprised—pleasantly, at least."

"You are enough of a student, Mr. Carter, to un-derstand that when a man wishes to master any given subject, he devotes a certain amount of study to that subject, the amount depending upon two things, one of which is the difficulty of the subject itself, and the other his own personal interest in the subject."

"Yes."

"I have devoted something approximating ten years to studying you."

"I certainly should feel greatly honored by so much attention."

"That is according to how you take it," replied the doctor, coolly.

"May I ask whether it was the difficulty of the sub-ject, or your interest in it which induced you to de-vote so much time to me?"

"Both."

"And might I inquire into the result of your studies?"

Dr. Quartz left his chair and crossed the room. From a table he took a globe map of the world, and

then returning until he stood directly in front of the detective, he held the globe poised in one hand while with the other he pointed at it.

"If I desired to learn thoroughly the geography of the world, so that I would be as familiar with every portion of it as I am with the neighborhood in which I was born, I would begin with a map something like this. After mastering the rudiments of this, I would take up each section by itself, by countries. Later, I would divide the countries themselves into sections. These I would again subdivide, and so on, *ad infinitum*. Do you understand? In the end, I would have mastered every detail, so that I could tell you as much about the known information of Thibet, for example, as you could tell me about—er—police headquarters in the city of New York."

"I see your point. What of it?"

"That is something like the method I have employed in studying you."

"But why have you studied me at all?"

"Because, Mr. Detective Carter, you succeeded in destroying a person whom I considered the best-informed, smartest and most intelligent man in the world."

"You refer to your distinguished predecessor, I suppose."

"I do. In the long warfare between you, you finally won. In the warfare between you and me, you will finally lose."

"Ah!" said Nick. "Then you admit that it is to be war between us."

"No; I do not admit it; I announce it."

"That fact will doubtless save both of us a lot of trouble."

"Oh, I don't know. It may possibly save you some trouble and anxiety. I had not considered you in the matter. I am glad you came here to-night, for if you had not selected to come to me, I should have gone to you."

"You might have experienced some difficulty in finding me, doctor."

"Not at all. I know every move you make, and have known them for years past. Don't forget that I have already told you of my study of you and your methods."

Nick shrugged his shoulders. There was somethi so coldly menacing in the attitude of the doctor, th the detective felt that the man was not boasting; ar he was curious to know just how far he would g in his assumed frankness.

But he was soon to discover, and to realize that D Quartz was not deceiving him when he boasted of h knowledge of the detective.

"I should have sought you for the purpose of tellin you a few things you do not know—for, little as yo may realize the fact, there are still some things in th world with which you are not familiar," continued th doctor.

"For instance?" said Nick.

"For instance, you do not use a disguise with whic I am not familiar, and you could not adopt a new or which I would not penetrate the moment I saw you You have not made a move in the pursuit of your pro fession, for the past four or five years, with which have not been in touch from the beginning to the end I have merely looked on from a distance, to see not onl what you would do, but how you would do it. You ar an open book to me, Carter."

"How pleasant!"

"I knew when you received the letter from Jerem Stone, calling you here, and I also knew the content of the letter. I knew exactly when you started fo Kansas City and what train you took to come here I knew when you arrived, and also that two of you assistants were on the train with you. I knew tha they left the car at the opposite end. I knew of th conversation between you and Stone at that time. know that you went to the freight yards to talk wit the foreman there, one William Durland by name. know where you took up your quarters, although yo attempted to be very secret about it."

"You do seem to have been unusually well poste about my actions," replied Nick, with a shrug; "stil you must admit that all you have told me could easil have been acquired by you since it happened, and no so easily before it happened, when it would have bee of more benefit to you."

know," continued the doctor, as if he had not Nick's remark, "that you have been in consulta- with the chief of police to-day, and that you have him of your intention to come here. I know that assistants, Ten-Ichi and Patsy are in the city and that each have their orders; I also know those orders are. I know, furthermore, what your assistant, Chick, is doing, and—— But what is se of telling you all this? I know every move you often before you make it. Look at me, Mr. r."

am looking at you, doctor."

have told you that I am the brother of the Doctor tz whom you once knew. Perhaps that is true d, perhaps I am the same man, come to life again your undoing."

ck laughed outright.

ou don't expect me to believe that, of course," he

don't expect you to believe anything; I don't care her you believe or not. You have in your pocket is moment a red velvet watch case containing wax which you wish me to give you the impression of of the fingers of my left hand. Give me the case I will accommodate you. Does it surprise you know that?"

es, it does," replied Nick, truthfully.

ou expected to catch me off my guard when you me to give you that impression, but you see I am med in advance of your intention. I have not d and studied for ten years, to arrive at the pleas- f this moment, for nothing, Mr. Carter."

o I perceive."

ou do not require the impression of my finger on wax, for I am perfectly willing to tell you that it ny finger which made the mark on the plush near door of the freight car. We are alone, Carter, I can tell you anything I please, and you can- se it against me for the good reason that you prove nothing. If you choose to go away and t what I have told you, I will simply deny that a conversation has taken place. My statement is as good as yours before a jury, or before a court. You know that. You will always require proof, in order to convict, and that proof you cannot procure. You see, Carter, that I defy you. I have committed enough crimes to be hung a hundred times—enough to sit in all the electric chairs that were ever made—enough to spend a hundred years in prison— enough to make the records of the world's greatest criminals fall into obscurity; but you cannot prove one of them, Carter; now, or ever. That is why I have chosen to be frank with you—and to defy you."

CHAPTER V.

THE VICTIM OF A CRUEL DEVICE.

"May I smoke?" asked Nick, leaning back in his chair and taking a cigar from his pocket.

"Certainly. Will you have one of my cigars?"

"No, thank you. I smoked one of your predecessor's cigars once, and I did not wake up again for several hours. I have more confidence in my own."

Dr. Quartz smiled.

"Do you suppose, Carter," he said, "that if I cared to render you unconscious, I could not have done so without moving from this chair, or resorting to anything so ancient as giving you a drugged cigar?"

"I think you would have found it somewhat difficult," replied Nick.

"Let me prove to you how easily I could accomplish it. Oblige me by leaving your chair for a moment. Do not hesitate, for I assure you that I will not move from where I am seated. I merely wish to convince you."

Nick left the chair in which he was seated, and stood upon his feet.

"Now," said the doctor, "you remember, do you not, that while you were seated here, your arm was resting upon the natural place for it—that is, on the arm of the chair. Placing your own arm there, served two purposes; one was, that it rested it, and the other was that it afforded you a purchase against which you could quickly and easily leap out of your chair, if I had made any belligerent move which made you think it necessary to do so. Is that correct?"

"Quite so."

"Now, if you will be good enough to examine either arm of the chair in which you were seated, you will discover that two long steel needles are protruding from it. Do you see them?"

"Yes, I see them."

"I have forced them from their places of concealment, simply by pressing a spring which is concealed in this chair. If I had pressed that spring while you were seated there, those needles would have pierced the flesh of your arms, and you would have been unconscious before you would have had time to draw a second breath."

Nick felt a shiver pass through him, although he gave no outward evidence of it.

"If," continued the doctor, "your arms had not been in the right position to have accommodated the needles you have seen, I could have pressed still another spring, and produced other needles, in other parts of the chair. So. Now look, and you will discover two in the seat of the chair, two more at the back of the chair, and two more where they would have pricked you in the head were you still seated there. Do you see them?"

"Yes."

"Do you appreciate the fact that I could easily have pricked you with any one of them, or with all of them, had I chosen to do so?"

"Yes."

"Very good. Those needles are tipped with the most delicate poison I know how to concoct. They are not deadly. They merely produce instant unconsciousness. You see, do you not, that if I wished to render you at my mercy, how foolish it would be to resort to the slow method of a drugged cigar?"

"Quite so."

"Be seated again, Mr. Carter. The needles have disappeared again, and I have no wish to prick you with them."

"If it is all the same to you, I will take a different chair," said Nick.

"Oh; any chair you please. This one in which I am seated, if you like."

The doctor chuckled when he made the remark, and Nick could have choked him gladly. But he drew forward another chair, turned it over to see that it not connected with the floor, and finally seated hin upon it.

"This will serve my purpose," he said. "You w I think, on the point of admitting some facts conne with your criminal record."

"Oh, I don't propose to give you detail, Mr. Ca I am not so generous as that. My one desire convince you that you are as a baby in my hands; I can, at any moment when I choose, brush you ou existence, as you would brush a spider from its with a woman's broom. When the British Gov ment erected Gibraltar, the place was meant to be pregnable, and it has proved so. When I prep myself for this experience I am just beginning, I m just as painstaking preparations. You have been c pletely at my mercy for almost ten years and you not, until now, known of my existence. Do you pose, after taking all that care and trouble, that I to put you out of the way without having my fun you? I hope I do not offend you."

"You certainly interest me."

"Do I? How pleasant! Let me see; I believe have elected to run me down, to arrest me, and to vict me for the murders of the five people whose c bodies, perfectly embalmed, were found in the fre car now at the museum of Jeremy Stone; am I rig

"You are dead right, if anybody should ask you

"Thank you. The mayor of the city instructed chief of police to engage your services and you accepted the case. Am I still correct?"

"You are still correct."

"And you have informed the chief that you are tive in your own mind that the freight car incide entirely Quartzonian, and that I, at least, possess cr nal knowledge of the facts connected with it?"

"That is correct, also."

"You have sworn—or shall I say promised—to vict me of those crimes, eh?"

"Something like that; yes."

"Well, Carter, I will not say that I am guilty of crimes you lay at my door, but I will admit that I co tell you all about the freight car, if I chose to do

with that admission from me, what are you going about it?"

am going to prove it. I am going to compel you l all you know, before I am done with you."

h!"

e doctor rubbed his hands together in evident satsion. His fat face was wreathed in smiles, and yes sparkled with pleasure.

hat is the way to talk," he said. "Now we are g at it. Now we understand each other. Do you , Carter, I really thought you would be afraid clare yourself."

fraid?" Nick laughed.

h, I would not have blamed you had you been d. But, instead, you are accepting the position hed you to assume."

m I, indeed? What position is that?"

Why, of open warfare between us. We begin on ground, don't you see?"

low so?"

acknowledge myself to be the greatest criminal out ison or unexecuted. You regard yourself as the really great and undefeated detective in the world."

dow all that, Quartz, and go on with your state-

"We meet on even ground, that is all. Have you watched a cat, when it has caught a mouse?"

often."

the mouse happens to be uninjured—that is, only ly hurt—the cat takes it to an open space, and calmly looks the other way while the mouse slowly s toward freedom. The cat does not appear to see nouse until it has almost escaped, but then it leaps ard and returns the mouse to the center of the space again; and this performance continues until at is tired, and generously—er—murders its vic-

You have seen that, have you?"

requently."

Well, in this case, I am the cat and you are the I have caught you. I have taken you to the space. Now, I am going to play with you. That I have studied you all these years. We meet on even ground, only I am much the stronger of the two because I am so much better prepared."

"You think so, no doubt."

"No; I know it."

"And yet, you have the same weak point possessed by the other Dr. Quartz."

"Not at all, Carter; not at all. You think I have; but I haven't."

Nick smiled.

"You think I have the egotism, the conceit of the other Dr. Quartz, but I assure you that you are mistaken. I possess merely the sure knowledge of my superiority. That is why I dare to acknowledge to you that I am the criminal you think me; but, my dear Carter, you will discover that I am the Gibraltar, while you are the poor fool who batters himself to pieces against the walls."

The detective still smiled and made no reply.

"Look around you, Carter; for I see that you require some further demonstration of my power, beside the needles in the chair. Do you see that open door through which you entered the room?"

"Plainly."

"It is within twelve feet of you; no?"

"About that, I should say."

"Doubtless you think that from where you are seated, you would have no difficulty in getting through that door before it could be closed. Let me see you try it."

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"I am tired of this horse play," he said. "Have you a spring connected with that door, as well as with the chair in which I was seated?"

"Look," replied the doctor; and as the detective looked, a pair of steel shutters that were concealed in the walls at either side of the aperture, flew together with a snap, and left the two men shut inside the room. And then, as the detective was in the act of turning, again to face Dr. Quartz, they flew open again, leaving the doorway as it had been before.

"You see?" said the doctor.

"Yes; I saw," replied Nick.

"Do you think you could have reached the doorway

soon enough to have passed through it before the steel shutters barred your way?"

"Perhaps not," assented the detective.

"My! How grudgingly you admit it, and yet you know it to be a fact. Carter, that door and those needles are only two among hundreds of devices I have arranged for your benefit—as well as for others', for I would not have you think that I have done you too much honor. Both the door and the needles come in quite handy for others, also."

"I have not a doubt of it."

"And this house is only one of several—it is not necessary that you should know how many there are or where they are—where I could receive you with the same sort of delicate attention."

"And now," said Nick, "now that you have demonstrated something of your boasted power, and have told me so much, will you tell me why you have taken all this trouble for my entertainment?"

"Would you like to know?"

"Certainly."

"Very well, I will tell you. I have purchased a small island in the Pacific Ocean to which I mean to retire some day, and enjoy the balance of my life as suits me best; that is, among my books and instruments. In a word, in study. There, I shall enjoy the delights of vivisection upon human subjects, without hindrance from the authorities, and to my heart's content. I have already stocked the place with prospective subjects, and you have no idea what a land of enchantment I shall make of it. Later, before I have done with you, I may tell you more about it; for the present, I wish to say that I intend to go there after I have done with you. But I must finish with you first.

"You see, Carter, I have promised myself that I will make you suffer a thousand pangs for every one you administered to my predecessor. I have promised myself that you shall be fooled and outwitted at every turn; that you shall first lose your reputation, then your fortune, then your friends, then your honor; I have promised myself that you shall see those whom you love best, stricken down one by one at your side, and that the corpses of your three assistants, and of the woman you love, shall finally find their several way to a dime museum, as those now in the freight car have done; and that, finally, you shall yourself furnish for me the most interesting of my subjects for vivisection. You love a woman named Carmen——"

Nick leaped to his feet with an exclamation of anger, and started toward the doctor, but even as he did so the chair in which he had been seated flew upward behind him as if his act of leaving it had released some hidden spring.

It seemed to leap toward him, as if the whole chair were a concealed spring. Sharp spikes protruded from it, which pierced his flesh as they struck him, and in an instant more he sank to the floor, unconscious, and to all appearance, lifeless.

CHAPTER VI.

THE DEMON DOCTOR'S FIRST VICTIM.

When Nick Carter opened his eyes, he looked around him in amazement, for he was in his room, in the house to which he had repaired after his advent in Kansas City, and where he had taken accommodations, believing that he could preserve the secret of his location.

He attempted to rise, but fell back again, realizing that his nerves were still benumbed by the drug which had been injected into his veins through the agency of the spikes in the chair.

His own rooms were at least two miles from the house of Dr. Quartz, and he knew that he must have been brought there while he was unconscious; and then, step by step, he recalled all that had occurred in the reception room of the doctor.

"What a consummate fiend that man is!" he mused, while he waited for his strength to return to him. "I doubt if there is an article of furniture in that room which is not prepared to be used as a trap if the necessity shall arise. The mere act of sitting in that chair I last occupied must have released the mechanism, so that I was bound to be wounded as I was as soon as I should attempt to leave it.

"That man made no idle threats, either. He meant

ha
wery word he said. And he has studied me almost as closely as he asserts.

"Well, why not? It would be like him—at least, it would have been exactly like the other Dr. Quartz to have done that very thing.

"Heaven! When one stops to consider what might shave been accomplished by a man of such brain as he epossesses, if only his intelligence were turned to a yright use, it is appalling.

"But he adopts villainy for his pursuit, and he takes it up precisely as he would undertake the study of any fscience.

l "What am I to conclude from all that he has said t to me? Why, plainly, that he has really devoted ten c years of his life—that is, one side of it—to studying me and my habits, while he has kept himself in the background, not permitting me even to know that he existed.

"It seems incredible that a man could do such a thing, and I should be the first to refuse to accept it as a fact if I did not understand how thoroughly Quartzonian it is.

"He has evidently taken pains to live near me, but to keep out of my sight. He doubtless is possessed of unlimited means, and has been able to keep a corps of detectives of his own through whom he has been able to observe.

"I could fancy, almost, that I can see the hand of Dr. Quatz in many of the cases I have had, as if he has engineered the villain in each case until he has grown tired of the game and permitted it to end.

"In ten years what could he not accomplish? He could get his own spies on the police of the cities he selected; he could worm his way into private offices through the employment of spies; he could have educated an army of assistants to do his bidding in any place where he wished to put them, and he could become, in the line he selected, almost omnipotent.

"And now, evidently the time has come when he is prepared to meet me, and to conquer me, as he believes, at every turn.

"And he prefers to do that openly; that is like Dr. Quartz.

"He prefers coolly to tell me that he is the guilty man, and then to defy me; that is like Dr. Quartz.

"He prefers to admit me to his parlor, and to show me a sample of his power, while he sits near by and laughs in his sleeve; that is like Dr. Quartz.

"He prefers to render me unconscious at the end of our interview, and then to return me here to my own room, uninjured, in order further to demonstrate his power; that is like Dr. Quartz.

"He prefers to tell me plainly that he is actually worse than what I think him—to almost acknowledge the five murders of the freight car—to demonstrate his ability to find out my most cherished secrets, and finally to go so far as to threaten the woman I love; all that is strikingly like Dr. Quartz.

"Why, Dazaar, the arch-fiend, was a joke beside Quartz; and I wonder—ay, I wonder if after all, even Dazaar was not merely a tool of his?

"Pshaw! What nonsense! And yet, to carry on that study of me, of which he boasts, he must have provided himself with human tools.

"One thing is certain. I cannot fight Dr. Quartz in the open. He is forewarned, and altogether too thoroughly forearmed for that. I must meet him on his own ground. Hello! I wonder what that is."

Nick had partly raised himself on the couch where he was lying, and he could see, resting on the table in the center of the room, a sheet of paper with writing on it.

"Quartz has left a letter for me, after the manner of his famous predecessor," he mused, rising, for now his nerves had regained their wonted energy, and no longer refused to do his bidding.

He felt thoroughly himself again, and so far as he could determine, there was not a vestige of the effects of the drug left about him.

He crossed the floor and took up the sheet of paper.

It was, as he had supposed, a message from Quartz.

It was written in a delicate chirography, almost as fine and perfect as copper plate, and was as follows:

"My Dear Carter: You have accused me of possessing the weaknesses of that other person to whom we have had occasion to refer, and one of them was, I

believe, that of writing too many letters for your delectation. I venture to write this one, nevertheless, and you are at liberty to use it to whatever advantage you can.

"You had the misfortune to faint away while you were in my rooms, and I have done you the service to bring you to your home, where you can receive that care of which you seem to stand so much in need.

"I trust you will have entirely recovered by the time you read this, and have no doubt that you will have done so.

"I am quite well aware that you desire nothing more than that I should say something in this letter which you could make use of, but such is not my purpose. The letter is merely to assure you of my interest in your affairs, and to repeat that I will leave no stone unturned to interest myself in them.

"Some day, when I shall have completed the duties which hold me here, and have prepared the way for my continued sojourn on that island in the Pacific, of which I gave you some slight account, I hope—for a time, at least—to have the pleasure of your society and your aid in my scientific researches. I am wedded to science, my dear Carter, and the most interesting of all sciences is the study of humanity itself.

"Perhaps you will be able to read between the lines of this letter, and to extract from it, that pleasant meaning which I cannot put into so many words. I hope so. In the meantime, let me venture to hope, that when you next see your good assistant, Patsy, you will remind him of my existence, and give him my remembrances.

"It is not necessary that I should sign my name, since you will know so well who penned these lines with the execrably bad pen I found on your table."

Nick laid the letter aside with a frown.

"Now, what does he mean by that reference to Patsy?" he asked himself.

He looked at his watch and then uttered an exclamation of surprise. Next, he started for the window and looked out upon the street.

"Great Scott!" he thought. "I must have been in that unconscious state many hours. This is another day. It is all of fifteen hours or more since that chair flew over and hit me, in Dr. Quartz's office. It was about nine in the evening when I was knocked over, and it is now almost noon of the next day."

He wheeled and looked anxiously around him.

"Patsy was to meet me here at midnight, last night," he mused, "and the reference in that letter can mean but one thing—one thing. Great Heaven, has he captured Patsy, and got the lad in his power already?"

For that was how it appeared to the detective, and that was the way he read the message of Dr. Quartz as contained in the letter.

"As soon as I was unconscious, Quartz brought me here," he mused. "Then he waited for the arrival of Patsy. I can see it all now. Patsy came while he was here—while I was lying helpless upon that couch, and Quartz had no difficulty in capturing him. That is what he means when he tells me when I next see my assistant, Patsy—and all that."

The detective was now thoroughly himself again, with every sense upon the alert.

Face to face with an actual incident which demanded his attention, he gave his mind entirely to it, to the utter exclusion of all things else.

His first move was to leave the room, to run rapidly down the stairs and open the street door.

His purpose in making this move was at once obvious, for he was able to tell at a glance that Patsy had been there, and also that he had not been able to leave his mark again when he went out; and also that Ten-Ichi had not been there at all.

One of his arrangements with his assistants was for each of them to leave a sign, made by a certain chalk mark, on the steps outside the house, when they entered it, so that he could tell, without entering, if either of them were there, or had been there and gone away again.

Patsy's mark was there—a figure 12, which said as plainly as if it had been written, that he had arrived there at midnight. If he had gone out again later, and could have done so, he would have crossed out the 12, and placed beside it another figure showing the hour of his leaving. The chalk mark was red; if Ten-Ichi had made it, it would have been green.

"So Patsy came here at twelve, and he was not able to leave his mark when he went away," mused the detective. "So much I know. Now to see if the lad

had an opportunity of leaving me any sign concerning what happened to him inside the house."

He hastened back to his room again.

Everything seemed to be in perfect order, although he had no doubt that Dr. Quartz had thoroughly examined everything the room contained.

For a time he looked in vain for some sort of message from the younger detective, but at last he discovered it; and when discovered, it seemed worthy of the young assistant.

The lad had evidently been bound and thrown upon the same couch where Nick awoke to consciousness, for scrawled in letters of blood against the white wall behind the couch, with bleeding finger which he had torn open on a nail in the couch covering so that he could write it, Nick found this message:

"QUARTZ HAS GOT ME."

That was all; but it was enough.

CHAPTER VII.

THE WOMAN BEHIND THE GRATING.

Just as the clocks in the city were striking twelve, and thus announcing the midnight hour, two figures raised themselves over the cornice of a house three doors removed from the one in which Dr. Quartz resided, and where Nick Carter held the interview with him which had ended so disastrously.

"So far, so good," said the voice of Nick Carter, addressing his companion. "Come on, Ten-Ichi, but be as silent as the grave."

He took the lead then, and the two glided swiftly and noiselessly across the roofs, until they paused in the shadow of a chimney which came from the Quartz residence.

"Yonder is the skylight," whispered the detective in the ear of his companion. "This is the first time in my experience when I have taken this method of entering a house, but it seemed necessary to-night."

"We are not inside the house yet," replied Ten-Ichi, in the same cautious voice.

"No; but we will get there. Come."

He led the way to the scuttle, which was just beyond the skylight, and attempted to raise it; but it resisted his efforts.

"Fastened," he muttered. "Give me the tools, lad."

Ten-Ichi passed a small bag of tools which had been slung across his shoulders, and from this the detective extracted a brace and bitt of fine workmanship. These were quickly adjusted, and in a few moments more the latter had eaten through the tin as well as the woodwork of the scuttle.

But the detective did not pause there.

Hole after hole was bored through the scuttle, and so closely together that when the detective finally desisted, and gave the tool back to his assistant, he wrenched what remained of the clinging wood loose in his grasp, and laid it silently on the roof beside him.

Next, he thrust his right arm through the opening, and after feeling around in the darkness for a considerable time, he drew it forth again, and raised himself to his feet.

"So much is done," he whispered. "Now, Ten-Ichi, I shall raise the scuttle and go down; but I wish you to remain where you are."

"Am I not to go inside the house with you?"

"No. You are to remain here. You can serve me best in that way. There may be a thousand bells ringing inside the house at this moment, to give Dr. Quartz warning of what I have already done. If he heard them, he is waiting for me, and I don't wish him to capture both of us, although I'll give him something to do to get me this time, even if he is on the watch."

"What shall I do here?"

"Wait. Wait and see what happens."

"And if I hear a scrimmage?"

"Listen with all your ears if you hear such a thing. I will shout an order. If you hear me call out the word 'Doctor!' you are to come to my assistance. If, instead, I use the word 'Quartz!' you are to make your way to the chief of police and tell him what has happened."

"All right."

"You understand thoroughly?"

"Yes."

"And you will obey to the letter?"

"I will."

"If you hear nothing at all, wait here for an hour, and then go to the chief of police. In that case, bring him here, but by the front door, and make him rip the house inside out, if it is necessary. He will have sufficient cause in case I am not back here inside of an hour."

Nick raised the scuttle then, and slowly let himself down into the darkness.

For a moment after his feet were upon the ladder under the scuttle, he paused and whispered to Ten-Ichi.

"Remember," he said.

"I will remember," replied the assistant.

Then the detective nodded his head, and in an instant more had disappeared from view into the interior of Dr. Quartz's house.

Nick descended the ladder to the floor, and then, after waiting a moment to listen, and being assured that no alarm of his approach had been given, he produced his electric search light and pressed the button.

The light revealed the fact that he was in a closet which was barely large enough to accommodate the ladder, and was, in fact, a narrow shaft, created solely to lead to the roof through the scuttle.

There was a door directly in front of him, and he found upon investigation that it was securely locked.

But locks, especially of the kind that are used in ordinary doors, offered slight obstacle to him, and in a moment, by the aid of his pick-lock, he had it opened. Then, extinguishing his light, he passed through into the uppermost hallway of the house, and closed the door behind him.

One word now, as to how the detective succeeded in reaching the roof of the house unobserved.

He was well aware that Quartz would not be caught off his guard if he could avoid it, and the moment he knew that Patsy had been captured, and was even at that moment in imminent danger of his life at the hands of Dr. Quartz, he decided that he would beard the lion in his den, so to speak; in other words, that he would penetrate to the interior of the doctor's house in search of him.

He immediately went out and found Ten-Ichi, whom he ordered to await him that night at the end of the block where his own rooms were, and then he returned to his own apartment.

There he waited till night, well knowing that one or more of the hirelings of the wily doctor was on the watch for him, but resolved to outwit them, no matter how many there might be.

To do this he remained in his room with the gas lighted, after it was dark. He also left the shutters of the window open, so that a person outside could readily see into the interior of the room.

He had already arranged a dummy for his uses; and this, which represented himself, as well as he could make it do so, he placed in a rocking chair, well out of sight through the window.

This done, he calmly seated himself in another chair which was in full view.

There he remained quietly reading, and now and then nodding his head, as if sleepy, and at times really appearing to go to sleep, but in reality wide awake.

At eleven o'clock he stretched his arms, yawned and rose from the chair. Then he crossed the room until he was out of sight from the window, and dropping to the floor, seized two ropes which were connected with the chair in which he had placed the dummy.

He pulled first upon one rope and then upon the other, thus giving the chair the appearance of being hitched across the room, as a person would move it who was comfortably seated and who was too tired or too lazy to rise.

The effect was perfect.

The chair, with its contents, moved as methodically across the room to its place under the light, as if there had really been a person seated in it, and from the street he knew that it appeared as if he had fallen asleep in his chair with his book in his hands.

After that, the rest was easy.

He had only to creep from the room, taking care not to permit himself to be seen from the street, and then to make his way through the scuttle of the house

the roof; thence across the roof to the end of the block, and then down to the street by way of the water pipes, to Ten-Ichi, who was awaiting him.

He had made no effort at disguise, for the reason that he did not expect to be seen at all.

From there, he and Ten-Ichi made their way directly to the vicinity of the house where Dr. Quartz lived, thence to the roofs, and the rest we know.

But now the detective was inside the house. Nay, more; he had penetrated to the top floor through the scuttle, and before him he felt was the opportunity to unravel the mysteries of that place.

He did not wish, for reasons of caution, to make use of his light again, lest it should betray his presence there, and so he crept on cautiously, feeling with his hands along the top of the balustrade, and assisted in some degree by a faint reflection of light which sifted in through the skylight over his head.

In this way he found, one after another, the doors of the four rooms on that floor.

Each of these doors responded to his touch, and each of the rooms was vacant.

After satisfying himself of that much, he returned to the hallway and to the head of the stairs, and thence down them, to the next floor below.

Here, he realized at once that he was on different ground.

There was a light burning in the lower hall, and enough of it penetrated to the floor where he was, to enable him to see his way about, accustomed as his eyes now were to darkness.

At first, as he paused to listen, not a sound came to his ears, although he could see that there was a light in the front room of the house—he could see where it shone through the crack under the door.

As he approached it, however, he could hear the murmur of voices, although they were so indistinct that he could not even determine whether they were masculine or feminine.

He got down on his hands and knees and pressed his ear against the crack under the door, and then he felt a thrill of pleasure, for he recognized Patsy's voice on the instant—recognized it, although he could not determine a word that was uttered.

Rising, he gave a moment's examination to the door, and discovered, rather to his surprise, that it was made to open outward, instead of in, as such doors usually are hung.

He discovered also that there were bolts on the outside of the door, and with exceeding caution, lest he should alarm those inside the room—for he had no positive knowledge that Quartz himself might not be there—he shoved back the bolts and pulled the door slowly ajar.

He discovered in that instant that he was not yet inside the room by any means, for beyond the door was still another, and this one was made of iron grating as thick and heavy as that which is used in prisons.

But it was not so much the grating which arrested his attention as it was what he discovered beyond it.

He was, in fact, gazing into the interior of a room in which two persons were fastened, by chains, to the opposite walls, so that they faced each other.

One of those persons was Patsy; and the other—he could almost have sworn that she was the same young woman, come to life again, whom he had seen with a knife through her heart, on the bed in the mysterious freight car.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME LIGHT UPON DARK EVENTS.

Neither Patsy nor the young woman who was his companion in misfortune was aware of his proximity, and he dared not make a sound until he was assured that he would not be heard by other ears than theirs.

The iron door was securely locked. He discovered that at a glance, and also realized that it would not be an easy matter, even for him, to open it.

He was about to turn away as silently as before, to investigate further through the house—for he did not wish to be surprised in his work of liberating Patsy—when the young woman spoke again, addressing the young assistant.

"I hope you will have the courage to go through with

the torture without a murmur, for it only delights him to see people suffer. He would smile like an angel if he could see you weep tears of blood."

"I think," replied Patsy, "that I will suffer less than you. I should rather be the victim of such torture, than to be compelled to be a helpless witness of it, when practiced upon another."

She smiled sadly across the half-lighted room at him.

"So far," she said, "I have not seen much of torture, although he has told me that it is to come. One of his theories is that he can inure the most delicate person to the most horrible sights so that they can look unmoved upon scenes which ordinarily would turn the heart of a strong man faint with horror. I have never seen anybody tortured as he says he means to torture you. Doubtless he will not compel me to see it all."

"How long have you been an inmate of this awful house?" asked Patsy.

"I do not know. I have no means of remembering time. I am either drugged, or unconscious through hypnotism, almost all the time."

"And you have not lost your reason, either. It is incredible."

"My reason? No; I have kept that; but it seems benumbed, nevertheless. For example, I feel a great sorrow for you, but it is not the sorrow I would have felt for another, long ago—before I came here. Dr. Quartz says that I am the best subject he ever had, and that I should be glad that I can do so much for science."

Nick could see that Patsy shuddered. He was about turning away the second time, when Patsy spoke again.

"How long will it be before he returns?" he asked of his companion.

"He said he would leave us together for an hour. I should say that half that time is already gone, is it not?"

"More than that," said Patsy; and then, as if in support of his statement, Nick heard the sound of approaching footsteps in the lower hall, and he drew back away from the door, closed it and shot the bolts back into place, and glided away up the stairs again, out of sight from the approaching person.

He had not an instant to spare.

Scarcely had he secured a safe distance, when the footfalls came up the stairs, and at last paused in front of the door through which the detective had just been listening.

There was sufficient light in the hall so that Nick could see him, and he drew one of his revolvers and leveled it at the human devil.

For a moment he was almost determined to shoot, and so put an end at once and forever to the career of Dr. Quartz; but for some reason he did not fire. It was not in his nature to shoot a man down in cold blood, although he felt that he would be eminently justified in doing so in this case.

Quartz undid the fastenings of the doors, after which he unlocked the iron grating, pushed it open, and entered the prison room.

He did not take the trouble to close either of the doors behind him, but continued on his way into the room, until he stood in the center of it, exactly between his two prisoners.

He paused there, and looked from one to the other of his prisoners, with an expression on his face and in his eyes which was entirely new to Nick Carter.

"I could imagine such an expression as that on the face of a sleep walker," thought the detective; and he leaned forward to examine the man the closer.

Dr. Quartz's face was as white as alabaster. The blood seemed to have entirely forsaken his cheeks, leaving them like the countenance of a corpse. His eyes, too, were dazed and glassy, and they seemed to stare upon his two victims without really sensing their presence.

"Is it possible," thought Nick, "that the man is the victim of some drug habit, and that he is now under the influence of whatever drug he takes? It would seem so. He certainly is not himself."

The oily, unctuous smile of Dr. Quartz was gone. The full lips, usually so red and so ready to smile, were stretched across his teeth as if in a half snarl, and were of the color of dirty chalk.

In fact, it was altogether a different man from the Dr. Quartz we have already seen, who stood there in the prison-like room, confronting his two victims who were chained to the wall, and who should have called forth the pity from a heart of stone.

And much to Nick's surprise, at this juncture, the young woman spoke again.

"You may talk on," she said to Patsy. "He will not hear you, or if he hears, he will not heed. I have seen him like this once before, and, oh, it was horrible! That was when he killed my cousin before my eyes, long, long ago. I do not know where it was, only that it was in another city."

"Your cousin," said Patsy. "That was the body we found in the freight car, with a dagger through her heart."

"Yes," she replied, "it must have been she whom you found, although he did not stab her—he choked her to death with his hands. Oh, my God! it was awful. I am glad that I cannot feel things as I did then. He was in just such a mood then as he is now. He looked the same as he looks now; and he turned on me, and would have killed me in the same way, only that the mood left him before he reached me, the color came back to his face, and he turned and looked at the corpse of my cousin in astonishment, as if he did not know, until then, that he had attacked her. Now, perhaps he will kill us both. I only hope that I will be his first victim. Hush!"

Dr. Quartz had turned toward her, as if the sound of her voice had disturbed him, and for a moment they all held their breath, while Nick Carter raised his revolver, ready to use in case of necessity.

But after a moment the doctor's chin sank upon his breast, as if he had drifted away again to the land of unreality; and then the young woman spoke again.

"Do I shock you with my seeming apathy to all these horrors?" she asked. "You would not wonder at it if you were aware of a tithe of what I have been compelled to see and hear ever since I fell into the power of that fiend—for fiend he is; you can never make me believe that he is human. I am used to horrors. I am accustomed to seeing murder, and talking about it. I am gradually losing my sense of perception between right and wrong, and I no longer have the quality of compassion in me, I fear. I know that Dr. Quartz murdered my father and my mother, as well as my cousin Alice and her father and mother, and yet I can speak of it and think about it all, and even touch his hands and talk with him about their deaths, without a shudder. He says he will eventually make me like Zanoni; but if he does, the first thing I will do then will be to kill him for it."

"Who is Zanoni?" asked Patsy, almost whispering the words, for he could not speak as she did, in the presence of that corpselike man who stood between them as if he were in a trance.

"Zanoni? She is the only person in the world for whom Dr. Quartz feels fear. See! He is shivering now, at the mere mention of her name. Zanoni, the terrible. Zanoni, the awful. Zanoni, the witch! Look at him! See him tremble!"

And indeed Dr. Quartz was trembling. He turned his head from side to side as if he could see out of his glazed eyes, and, looking at him closely, one might have seen that red spots of blood were gathering in the corners of them—the sort of red spots which appear in the eyes of a maddened bull when it is about to charge.

"Hush!" said the girl. "For your life do not speak now."

But there was another who acted then, for Nick Carter leaped through the doorway into the room, and with a quick bound, lighted upon the back of Dr. Quartz and struck him over the temple with the butt of his revolver.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CONFESSIONS OF NANINE.

The blow seemed to do for Dr. Quartz what he had in vain attempted to do for himself; that is, to throw him out of that dazed condition which had held him in its grasp ever since the moment he entered the room.

The instant when Nick Carter leaped upon him, he seemed to come to himself again; but already the blow from the butt of the revolver had fallen.

It was a heavy weapon, and it was wielded by no light and delicate touch; but heavy as the blow was, it only staggered the man beneath it.

And even as he staggered, Nick raised his other hand and dealt him a second blow, this time with his fist, so that he and Dr. Quartz fell to the floor together, the latter underneath, the detective on top.

But the man, even under the violence of those two blows, was so strong and his vitality was so great, that he struggled as few could have done, even then.

On the other hand, Nick Carter knew what sort of a man he had tackled. He had once before had occasion to feel the strength of Dr. Quartz's muscles, and he knew that it required all his own to master him under any circumstances.

And he did not hesitate to use every art and every advantage he could employ in gaining ascendency over the doctor.

As they fell to the floor, the detective struck him again and again, always with violence, and always as forcibly as if it were the first blow he was delivering; and by dropping the revolver from his right hand he managed to secure a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and to force them upon the wrists of the doctor before he could prevent the act.

And still the man struggled and fought with all his might, so that Nick, even then, in order to conquer him, seized again the weapon from the floor and dealt with it another blow which was effectual, and which stiffened him out for a moment; and then Nick lost no time in fastening another pair of shackles to his ankles.

There was blood upon the doctor's face when Nick rolled him over—blood where the butt of the revolver had cut through the skin, and where Nick Carter's knuckles had made an abrasion or two; but there was also a smile on his lips, and the detective saw that he was now entirely conscious, and so again master of himself, if not of circumstances.

"You caught me napping, Carter," he said, with cool assurance. "Otherwise you would be here, where I am, and I would be there, where you are."

"It is much better as it is," replied Nick, grimly. "I think, doctor, that we will prove something against you, a little sooner than you anticipated."

"You certainly have turned the tables for the moment; but, don't forget that you are not out of the house yet."

"Oh, no, I won't forget. Don't worry."

As Nick spoke, he saw Dr. Quartz turn his eyes toward the girl who was chained to the wall, and he saw come into them that hard, determined expression which he knew indicated an effort on the part of a hypnotist to exert his power.

As quick as a flash he leaped between the doctor and his victim, and the same instant he struck the man a sharp blow across the eyes with the flat of his hand.

"Damn you!" said the doctor; but Nick did not wait to hear more, or to reply. Instead he seized the man

in his arms and dragged him through the door into the hall outside; and once there, he calmly tied a bandage over his eyes, and with a third pair of handcuffs, fastened him to a spindle in the balustrade.

"I am going back inside the room now, doctor, to have a little talk with our two friends who are in there; but I shall remain where I can keep you in sight, and if you make any effort to free yourself, don't forget that I am a dead shot, and that I shall not hesitate to prove it."

"Faugh!" said the doctor. "Go there, if you like. Don't worry me by talking to me. The tables shall be turned on you before you are an hour older."

"You seem to take things quite easy," said Nick, smiling.

"Why not?"

"This is a case where the mouse is playing with the cat, isn't it, doctor?"

"Why, yes, it would almost seem so."

"And yet, you seem to keep your nerve with you."

"My nerves? They are of iron, as you will know some day. A nerve of iron and a heart of ice; that is it, Carter."

Nick turned without making a reply, and re-entered the room beyond the iron grating. Ten-Ichi, waiting on the roof, was altogether forgotten, or, if remembered, unheeded.

Nick's first duty inside the room was to free Patsy from the chains which bound him; he next crossed to the girl, and in a moment he had freed her also, for the keys which fitted the locks of the chains had been placed by the doctor upon a chair just out of the reach of his victims. Tantalizingly near, but sufficiently far away to be useless to them.

Nick silenced Patsy with a gesture; then he placed one of his own revolvers in the hand of the young assistant and motioned him to stand guard over the doctor in the hallway.

Then he turned again to the young woman.

Ever since his first leap into the room when he had attacked the doctor and so summarily overcome him, she had watched the detective with a peculiar expression on her sad but beautiful countenance. She seemed, indeed, as if she were endeavoring to understand what was taking place, but had not the ability to grasp its entire meaning.

Now, when he turned to her, she greeted him with a smile which was like the expression of a pleased child—and yet Nick saw that there was sufficient intelligence in her eyes to make her a competent witness.

"Tell me your name," he said, kindly.

"My name?" she repeated after him. "I have almost forgotten it; but not quite. The doctor has refused to let me go by my own name since I have been with him."

"But you remember what it was, do you not?" asked the detective.

"Oh, yes. It was Nanine—Nanine Duclos."

"And the name of your cousin—that cousin whom you say the doctor killed before your eyes—that cousin whom Dr. Quartz choked to death and afterward placed in the freight car—what was her name?"

"Her name? It was Marie. Her last name was the same as mine, you know."

"Yes, I understand. Now, Nanine, the doctor has told you about the freight car, has he not?"

"Oh, yes, indeed!"

"Tell me what he told you about it."

"Why, the same as he told other people, I suppose."

"Never mind; tell me what he told you."

"Well, you know he was to marry Marie. All the arrangements had been made for the wedding, and he had built the car and was to have a fine time traveling in it. We lived in another city then. I don't know where it was, only that it was somewhere in the East."

"And I suppose," said Nick, leading her on as gently

as he could, for she talked like a child upon whom horrors have made little or no impression, "that your father and mother and that Marie's father and mother were with you all that time, during the preparations for the wedding, were they not?"

"Oh, yes."

"I heard you say that the doctor killed them also. Did he put them in the car with your cousin?"

"Oh, yes; he said so. I suppose he did. He sent the car somewhere. You see, he did not mean to hurt Marie when he killed her. He did it in a fit of rage such as he has at times, when his face turns the color of chalk, and he goes mad. I have heard him say that some day he will kill himself in one of those mad fits. He says he cannot cure them, and it makes him wild when he thinks there is anything he cannot cure."

"What were the names of your father and mother? And what were the names of the father and mother of Marie?"

"My father and mother were George and Anne, and the others were uncle Peter and aunt Myra."

"Where did you live before you knew the doctor? Can you remember that?"

"Oh, yes. On Beacon Street, in Boston. We were all very happy then. Dr. Quartz came to us because uncle Peter was ill. The doctor cured him. After that, aunt Myra was very ill, and the doctor cured her also. And then Marie was ill. We were all ill, one after another, and the doctor was so expert that he cured us all, and my father and my uncle gave him a great deal of money. But he earned it, I have heard them say, by saving the lives of all of us."

"Your father and your uncle were rich men, were they not?"

"I suppose so. I don't know."

"You kept horses and carriages and servants; eh?"

"Oh, yes. Lots of them; and now all those things are mine. I have heard the doctor say so. That is why he keeps me here, I think, so that nobody will get my money away from me."

"I understand. Now, why does he chain you in this room as I found you? He does not keep you here all the time, does he?"

"Oh, no, indeed. I spend most of the time in a beautiful room where there are birds, and my pet cat. He waves his hands over me there, and puts me to sleep so that I have beautiful dreams and forget all the things I do not wish to remember. I am always glad when he comes to me to give me those dreams."

"And you don't remember how long it is since you have been living so, do you?"

"No; only that it is a very long time. I have lived in this house a long time. I traveled a long way on the railroad before I came here, and, oh, it was a long time after he killed Marie and the others, before we came here."

"Did the doctor ever tell you why he put all those dead people in the freight car to send them away somewhere?"

"No; only he laughed a great deal about it, and said it was a good joke, and that it would set the dogs to barking. He said that he would be there, wherever it was, when the dogs began to growl and bark, and that he would have fun in watching the leader of the pack trying to get upon the scent."

"Ah! He said that, did he? Did he also tell you the name of the leader of the pack?"

"Yes. He said the leader of them all would be Nick Carter, and that one day he would send him and his friends on the same sort of a journey."

CHAPTER X.

THE MAN OF IRON NERVE.

"You have not told me, yet, why he chains you here at times," insisted Nick.

"Why, to make me like Zanoni; to make me accus

formed to horrors, he says. To make me love the sight of blood; the suffering of others; to make me like they are. And he is making me so. While I was talking with the young man who was chained to the wall, and whom you just set free, I found that I was anxious for the doctor to come so that I would see what he was going to do. Oh, yes; I am getting that way. I am getting like Zanoni."

"Who is Zanoni?"

"Zanoni, the terrible; Zanoni, the beautiful; Zanoni, the awful; Zanoni, the witch."

"But who is she?"

"The only person in the world whom Dr. Quartz fears; that is who she is."

"Does she live here?"

"I don't know. She comes and goes at will. She is mad. I have heard the doctor say that. She is mad. She is the success of one of his experiments. He says that he has destroyed her soul, and made her like an animal, only that she still has her cunning and her intelligence, so that she can appear in any part she pleases, and fool all the world. You would think her a saint from heaven, and she is a devil from hell. I have heard the doctor tell her those very words. Ah, I tremble when I think of Zanoni. She comes to my room sometimes, and heats an iron in the fire in the grate until it is red hot, and then she waves it before my eyes and says that she is going to put them out so I won't be so beautiful. And sometimes she bares my arms to the shoulders and pricks them with needles until they smart terribly. She is a terrible woman; but, oh, so beautiful. And there is, somewhere, another young woman, who is beautiful, like me, and whom this Nick Carter that he speaks about, loves."

"Ah!" said Nick, breathing hard.

"And I have heard the doctor say that he is going to capture her and bring her here, when he has finished his education of me, and made me like Zanoni; and that then he is going to turn the other young woman, whose name is Carmen, over to us to torture. But I would never torture a girl like myself, although I know Zanoni would do so, gladly."

The girl ceased speaking with a suddenness which astonished the detective, and he saw that she was staring in terror over his shoulder at something or some person behind him.

He turned involuntarily to see what it was, only to discover, standing in the doorway, confronting him, the figure of a young and beautiful woman, whose eyes were blazing out at him like the eyes of a mad person.

"Zanoni!" was the thought which came to him on the instant; and he started forward toward her, just as he saw, beyond her shadow, the figure of Patsy creeping toward her from the hallway.

It was evident that she had entered the room without seeing either Patsy or Dr. Quartz where Nick had left them, in the hallway.

There was a strange smile of menacing power on her face, and she was in the act of raising her right hand, which contained a pistol. And Nick understood from her attitude, and also from the expression of her eyes, that she intended to use it; that she meant to fire, and fire to kill, the instant the weapon should be on a level with his heart.

But Patsy was creeping toward her, and Nick saw that he would reach her before she could fire; and at the same instant also, there came the sound of hammering against the street door. This was followed by a heavy crash, as the door fell in, and the detective remembered then the instructions he had given to Ten-Ichi, and he knew that the young assistant had gone to police headquarters and had brought officers with him to the house.

For the first time he realized how long a time had elapsed since he had descended through the scuttle from the roof.

As the crash of the falling door sounded through the house, Patsy leaped forward.

He seized Zanoni by the arms and pinioned them to her sides; and there he held her while the detective calmly stepped forward and secured her.

Strangely enough, she did not attempt to struggle. She stood quite still while the detectives bound her so that she could not escape; and just as that was accomplished, Ten-Ichi, followed by the officers he had brought with him, entered the room.

It was a strange group, which, ten minutes later, was assembled in that room with the iron doors.

Nanine Duclos was seated on the floor at one side of the room, at the feet of Dr. Quartz, for notwithstanding the fact that he had been in the hall with his eyes bandaged, he had managed, the moment that Nick ceased to talk to her, to gain his mesmeric, or hypnotic, power over her, and by the time the officers entered the room, she was completely under his control. She went to him, and she came back into the room with him, and refused to leave him, whimpering like a spoiled child when they attempted to force her from his side.

"Let her alone," was all that Nick said. "We will find a way to overcome that power later on."

Zanoni remained where they had seated her, passive, and, to all appearance, oblivious to everything that was taking place around her.

Dr. Quartz was seated in an armchair, calmly surveying the officers and the detectives who were grouped around him; and there was a smile of derision on his face—a smile which Nick could have sworn was precisely the same that the original Dr. Quartz delighted to use to show his utter contempt for his enemies.

"It is all up with you now, doctor," said Nick. "We know the story. Nanine has told me all, as you no doubt heard, and I think that hangman's rope is awaiting you somewhat sooner than you anticipated."

"The rope is not yet made that will hang me," replied the doctor, calmly.

"Nor the electric chair that will hold you, I suppose," said Nick.

"How wise you are, Carter."

"The mouse is playing with the cat; eh?"

"No; the cat has merely permitted the mouse to go a little further from its claws than was wise; but presently the cat will jump again, and the mouse will be under its paws once more."

"We will see," said the detective.

"Bah!" replied the doctor.

Nick turned toward Zanoni.

"Young woman," he said, sternly, pointing at the doctor, "do you know this man to be a murderer?"

To the surprise of all, she calmly replied:

"I do."

"And do you know that he killed the five people in the freight car?"

"I do," she replied, as calmly as before.

"You will swear to that before a court, will you?"

"I will," she said; her expression did not change while she was making these replies, and she might have been made of stone or putty for all the feeling she manifested.

"That is enough," said the detective. "Take them all away, officers."

Dr. Quartz laughed aloud.

He did not appear to be in the least affected by what Zanoni had said.

"That chap is a man of iron nerve, at least," said one of the officers.

"An iron nerve, and a heart of ice," said the doctor, laughing; "eh, Carter?"

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 415, will contain "The Great Hotel Murders; or, Dr. Quartz's Quick Move." In this you will read the story of the bride and bridegroom who were pursued by the vengeance of Dr. Quartz.

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